

Message Text

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: SHAN UNITED ARMY SEEKS SUPPORT FROM AN AMERICAN TO-
BACCO COMPANY

REF: CHIANG MAI A-002

SUMMARY: THE SHAN UNITED ARMY HAS APPROACHED AN AMERICAN
TOBACCO COMPANY AND ASKED FOR FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE IN GROWING TOBACCO IN THE AREA NEAR BAN HIN
TAEK. AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI HAS DISCOURAGED SUCH
ASSISTANCE, EMPHASIZING THE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SUA.
WE WILL TAKE THE SAME APPROACH WITH COMPANY OFFICIALS
IF THEY PURSUE PROPOSAL WITH US. WE RECOMMEND THE
DEPARTMENT ALSO TAKE THIS LINE. END SUMMARY.

1. MR. NEVILLE IMRAY, A RHODESIAN NATIONAL WHO HEADS
THE CHIANG MAI OFFICE OF ADAMS INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO
COMPANY, AN AMERICAN FIRM, HAS REPORTED TO AMCONSUL
CHIANG MAI THAT HE MET WITH SUA LEADER CHANG CHI-FU
AT SHAN UNITED ARMY HEADQUARTERS AT BAN HIN TAEK,
FEBRUARY 18, TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF TOBACCO-
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GROWING IN AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE SUA. OUR CONSUL
REPORTS THAT IMRAY WAS TAKEN TO MEET CHANG CHI-FU
AT BAN HIN TAEK BY BORDER PATROL POLICE (BPP) COLONEL
PRASIT RAKPRACHA, WHO HAS WORKED FOR YEARS AS A
REPRESENTATIVE OF RTG TO VARIOUS BURMESE DISSIDENT
GROUPS. (AMCONSUL'S FULL REPORT OF DISUCSSION,
CHIANG MAI A-0002, MARCH 2, 1978, HAS BEEN POUCHED TO

THE DEPARTMENT.)

2. CHANG CHI-FU EMPHASIZED THAT HE WISHED TO DIVERSIFY HIS INTERESTS SINCE THE RTG NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES WERE REDUCING HIS PROFITS IN THE DRUG TRADE. IN ORDER TO SUPPORT HIS POLITICAL AIMS OF GAINING CONTROL OF THE SHAN STATE OF BURMA AND PROCLAIMING AN INDEPENDENT STATE, CHANG PROPOSED THAT, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM ADAMS INTERNATIONAL, HE TEACH THE HILLTRIBERS IN THE AREA CONTROLLED BY THE SUA TO GROW ORIENTAL (TURKISH-TYPE) TOBACCO.

3. IMRAY TOOK CHANG'S PROPOSAL SERIOUSLY, AS HE BELIEVES THIS VARIETY OF TOBACCO COULD BE GROWN IN THE HIGHLANDS OF NORTHERN THAILAND. HE SUBMITTED A REPORT TO ADAMS' HOME OFFICE, RECOMMENDING THAT THE COMPANY CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL. IMRAY SEEMED PERSONALLY ENTHUSIASTIC CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITIES OF SUCH A VENTURE.

4. IN RESPONSE, THE CONSUL EMPHASIZED THE ILLEGAL ASPECTS OF CHANG CHI-FU'S BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND STRESSED THE FACT THAT ANYBODY DEALING WITH THE SUA WOULD BE DEALING WITH AN ORGANIZATION THAT PRODUCES MORE HEROIN THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD. THE CONSUL ALSO MENTIONED OUR SUSPICIONS ABOUT
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THE SUPPOSED POLITICAL MOTIVES OF THE SHAN UNITED ARMY.

5. COMMENT: WE DO NOT RPT NOT KNOW WHETHER ADAMS INTERNATIONAL WOULD IN FACT TAKE ITS REPRESENTATIVE'S PROPOSAL SERIOUSLY BUT BELIEVE OUR POSITION IN OPPOSITION TO ANY SUCH DEALINGS SHOULD BE UNEQUIVOCALLY CLEAR. IF COMPANY DOES PURSUE THIS PROPOSAL WITH US, WE WILL TAKE STRONGLY NEGATIVE VIEW AND RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT DO SO ALSO.
WHITEHOUSE

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